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5 January 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Current Intelligence

SUBJECT : Intelligence Conference, Fort Shafter,
Hawaii, 11-15 December 1972

The annual Indochina Order of Battle Conference was attended by representatives from all major military and civilian agencies in the Washington area as well as from selected field commands, attaché and Clandestine Services' offices. Most of the participants were working-level analysts directly concerned with Communist military affairs in the four Indochina states (Cambodia, Laos, North and South Vietnam), primarily on the unit bookkeeping end of the business. There were also a few individuals from the current intelligence analysis and/or reporting side of the problem.

The bulk of conference time was spent in reviewing, unit-by-unit, Communist military forces in each country to reach agreed listings that will serve as a "baseline" for computerized order of battle, henceforth to be maintained by USARPAC in Hawaii. Complete or near complete agreement on units and numbers of men were reached for North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Differences on replacements and unit strengths for Communist units in South Vietnam were remanded to Washington agencies for settlement. The notable achievement of the conference was the first time ever compilation of (and agreement on) a Khmer Insurgent order of battle for Cambodia. The conferees also revived the "back-channel" communications system--

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informal opinion exchanges between field and Washington agencies on order of battle problems similar to that used for infiltration matters. The remainder of time was spent in discussions of the mechanics of post-cease fire intelligence reporting.

The cease-fire discussions, although constituting a relatively small portion of the conference, did provide a glimpse of the changes in store for the current intelligence analyst in Washington once the shooting stops. As planning stands now, MACV will go out of business 30 days after a cease-fire, to be replaced by the "Defense Resources Support Termination Office" (DRSTO). DRSTO will put out a report similar to MACV's daily summary (DISUM)--the basic source of military information on South and North Vietnam. DRSTO is slated to take over all functions of MACV and has assigned a relatively small staff (ten military, and 270 civilians, [redacted] to cover military intelligence and liaison with the South Vietnamese. DRSTO, unlike MACV, must report through USARPAC to Washington.

The personnel cut back means that DRSTO will give short shrift to current military intelligence needs, notably monitoring cease-fire violations. Its reports are apt to be somewhat later than those now coming from MACV. A MACV officer at the conference added that, whereas it now takes as much as three weeks for documents to go from South Vietnamese to US military channels, the DRSTO-USARPAC link could very well add still more time to the process. The MACV officer commented that the bulk of

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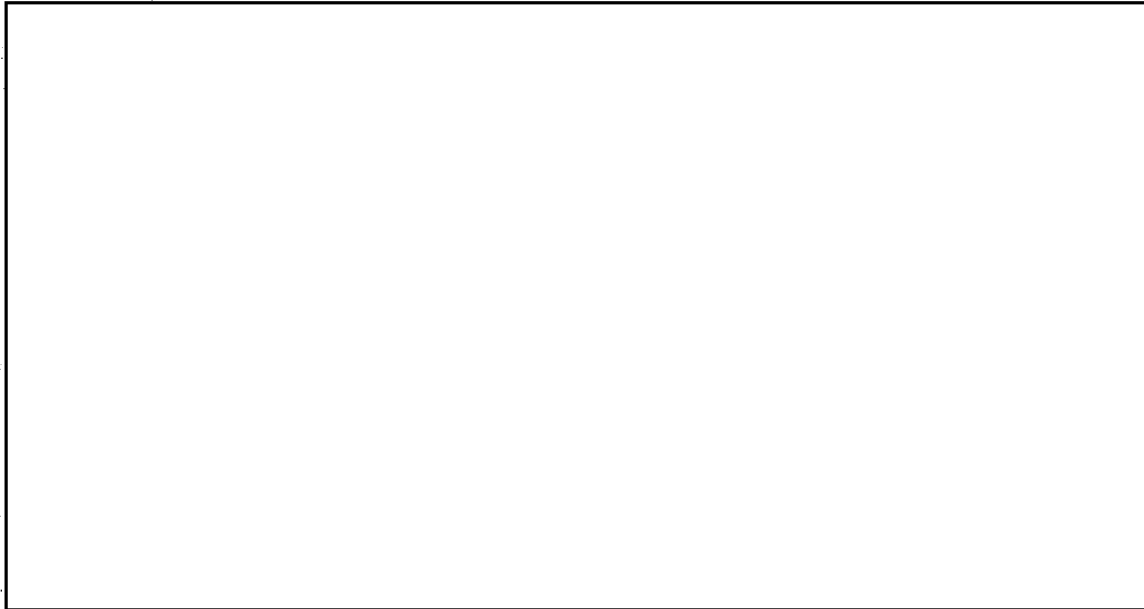
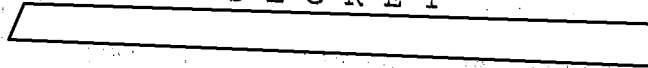
information presently forwarded via the DISUM is the result of personal relationships between South Vietnamese staff and US liaison officers that will be cut off once the latter leave the country. DRSTO will maintain some sort of liaison with the South Vietnamese Joint General Staff, but there currently are no plans to maintain the kind of US-South Vietnamese links at the regional level presently existing in the MACV set-up.

The somewhat lower priority of current intelligence reporting apparently is in part the result of a US post-cease fire presence that is, according to CINCPAC, geared toward maintaining combat readiness for resumption of hostilities. Moreover, there is the underlying assumption that both sides will adhere to the conditions of the cease-fire and there will be little or no significant military activity to report on.


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Copies of the formal conference report and observations from the SAVA participant are attached. Individual country order of battle reports and listings have been passed to the appropriate OCI/FE desk.


Vietnam Task Force, OCI

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